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Written Testimony of  
Kurt Westby, Commissioner  
Department of Labor  
Veterans' Affairs Committee  
March 7, 2019

Good Morning Senator Maroney, Representative Borer, Senator Logan, Representative Vail and members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony regarding **Senate Bill 968, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MILITARY TO MACHINISTS JOB TRAINING PROGRAM FOR VETERANS**. My name is Kurt Westby and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Labor (DOL).

I strongly support the intent of this proposed bill, which seeks to establish a Military to Machinists job training program within the Labor Department for veterans. The Office of Veterans Workforce Development, as specified in the bill, has been incorporated into the American Job Center Network and no longer exists as a separate office.

The roles of our veterans' services staff are regulated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists provide intensive services and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans and eligible spouses, but they are permitted to serve only those who have significant barriers to employment or have otherwise been designated by the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) as qualifying for DVOP services. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) conduct outreach to area employers to assist veterans in gaining employment, and they facilitate the employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in the state's American Job Centers. The LVERs' efforts, however, are focused on engaging the local business community and advocating for the hiring of veterans, not providing direct, staff-assisted services to veterans.

DOL's partners and Wagner-Peyser staff also assist veterans. Wagner-Peyser provides all job seekers access to job search preparation and placement assistance. Due to the federal restrictions regarding the populations that may be served by DVOPs and LVERs, Wagner-Peyser staff would be needed to implement SB 968. However, designating Wagner-Peyser staff as a liaison under this proposed bill would strain the challenges they are currently facing with their existing responsibilities.

Our Wagner-Peyser funding has remained stagnant. Although we are currently referring veterans to training providers, potential funding sources and employment opportunities, the proposed bill requires an even higher level of support for both veterans and employers as we would need to assist them in applying for tuition waivers, grants and tax credits.

While this bill proposes thoughtful and needed services for veterans, DOL's staff is not equipped and funded to carry out the responsibilities in this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony.